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My Rubaiyat  
by

Jadakichi Hartmann





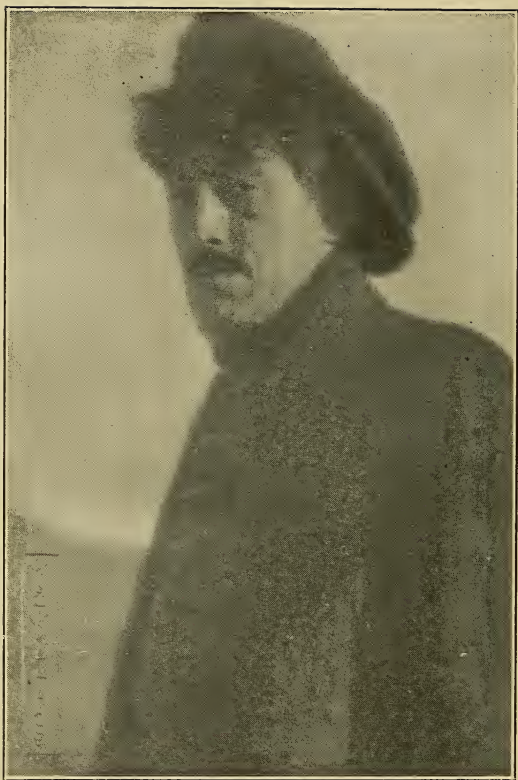
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My Rubaiyat  
by  
Sadakichi Hartmann



*Author's Edition*  
*The Mansan Printing Company*  
*Saint Louis*

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Of a poem of this scope and character, it can never be said that it is complete and finished. No doubt, it will be revised many times, but the poem has crystallized sufficiently in thought and versification to be offered to the public.

The rhythm may appear strange at times. To fully appreciate it, it would be necessary to hear the author read the poem. The metre is a combination of Whitman's free rhymeless rhythm, the *vers libre* which changes with every subject and mood, and the vague alliteration of sound in quarter tones, characteristic of Japanese poetry.





## I.

What should we dream, what  
should we say,  
On this drear day, in this sad  
clime.

In the garden the asters fade,  
Smoke of weed fires blur the  
plain,  
The hours pass with a sullen  
grace -  
Can we be gay if skies are  
grey.

## II.

Would life be saner in the  
South,  
On some palm-girt, sunnier  
beach,  
Some lambent world of green  
and gold  
Fanned by the charm of Orient  
lay!  
'Tis vain delusion thus to think  
That life will change with  
change of scene.

## III.

Man cannot get away from  
facts  
Alas, stern duty looms  
supreme,  
For certain things we must  
perform,  
Obey the inward voices' call.  
Calm joyous days cannot be  
wooded  
Lest our conscience is at peace.

## IV

Life is to most a weary task,  
A bitter strife for daily bread.  
We cannot act as we would  
like,

We cannot gain for what we  
strive.

To bear our burden cheerfully  
Is all this earth allows to  
us.

V

Our tired soul with faint  
forced smile  
But rarely scales the loftier  
themes  
Fair Hafiz and Anacreon  
Have they drunk, laughed and  
sung in vain!  
Does grove and grange no  
longer yield  
The idyls of Theocritus!

VI.

Was life once happier than  
now?

Who is there to tell the story  
Of the bliss of dim dead ages.  
We know that roses still bloom,  
Books and music still make  
us dream,  
Why mourn o'er "snows of  
yesterdays"

## VII

There were ever some more  
favored  
Who carefree basked in fortune's  
sun.

The rest did toil. And you and I?  
We hear the same recurrent  
rhymes,  
Like changing seasons, night  
and day,  
We simply come, sojourn, and go.

VIII

We enter the world unbidden,  
Plod along roads as we know  
best.

One is born rich, the other poor,  
Who knows what helps a  
mortal most.

Ere we comprehend what we  
want

We are forever what we are.



## IX

The laughter of childhood is

gone,

The toy castles we built are  
lost -

Can we redeem in future days

The disappointments of the  
past!

Our nursery songs will they  
change

Into jubilant songs of love!

X

Light headed youth, all smiles  
around

In dewlit gardens of spring  
morn

No heed takes of the dial's pin-  
Youth wants to possess every-  
thing-

While the sun runs its  
ruthless course  
And shadows begin to lengthen.

## XI.

In open woods some summer  
night,

The sound of the wind in the  
leaves ~

Two vagrant lovers hand in  
hand ~

O'er treetops the errant moon.

Oh, this mad desire to possess!

To waste the soul on blood-red  
lips.

## XII

Sex is a power all cherish,  
We worship it on bended knees,  
Like old wine it yields the  
magic  
Of oblivion and ecstasies,  
The moments drift on golden  
clouds  
To regions of the white beyond.

XIII.

Alas, that pleasures never last,  
That we must leave the fairy  
                                  woods  
And pass along the great highway.  
As much as horizons may  
                                  beckon,  
They flee us the more we pursue  
To distances we neer can reach.

## XIV

The more we give the less we

gain—  
This is a bitter truth to tell.

Yet passion is a fleeting thing  
As flowers wane in summer's  
heat,

Thus eager kisses, thigh to thigh  
Turn phantoms with the colder  
morn,

XV

Why had you, dearest, to leave  
me!

Why must friend from friend  
depart.

Perchance, I shall find the  
answer

Midst howling winds and rain  
Where sombre forests sway and  
moan

And lightnings stir the darkest  
lair.

XVI

Few think they can give without  
gain,  
They attempt to barter with love.  
Love comes, it is here, it departs  
Leaving wet eyes and broken hearts.  
How when we are young can we  
guess:  
Love's winter ne'er returns to spring





## XVIII

When the bloom of youth has faded,  
Life is naught but grey routine,  
Sup well, sit warm, drink deep,  
    sleep sound,  
That is the gamut of pleasures.  
New vista beckon here and there  
Yet men stay, sullen, where they  
    are.





*XXI*

*Can a being ever be yours?  
Do you know the thoughts of a  
friend.*

*Why does your heart go to strangers  
When you own a heart that is true?  
Sunlight passes. The night draws  
near.*

*Have you been loyal to anyone?*



## XXIII

Let me pass on to the seashore,  
Watch the traverse of white sails,  
The seagulls in their spiral  
flight,  
The breakers that brighten the  
waves,  
And as in rambles of boyhood  
Fling pebbles out into the sea.

## XXIV

They skip o'er the gleaming  
surface,  
They sink and vanish from sight  
As all that abides on this earth.  
Yet on the surface like stray  
thoughts  
Each ripple owns an inner life  
And wavelike stirs the azure  
brine.



## XXV

The circle widens, travels farther,  
With each emotion keenly felt  
Onward it pushes 'cross the waves  
Of stormlashed oceans to unbend  
Its tide of beauty on the shore  
Of some hopeswept and sun-  
kissed isle.

XXVI

And there amidst some rarer air  
To blossom forth in some great  
deed~

May it be done by hand or mind~  
For the upheaval of the race,  
To reach some pinnacle of truth  
Where light envelopes you and  
all.

XXVII

*This is the land where giant  
minds,  
Vaster than light, vaster than  
space  
Hear whisperings of the infinite,  
And with proud sorrow in their eyes,  
Their wild maned coursers ever  
ready,  
Fly off into the skies of thought.*

## XXVIII

Yet who can follow flights like  
these,  
Who plucks the stars from night's  
blue vault!  
Imagination, sluggish thing,  
Will not obey the gayer moods,  
Our mind can only peer as far  
As fate has lent it eyes to see.

## XXIX

Men do not think, they merely  
dream,  
They only long for crude, rough  
things,  
Madly chasing will o' the wisps,  
Success by force they try to  
grasp,  
It lures them on to wilder scenes  
Where the peace of their souls  
is lost.

## XXX

Why this dull haste, this bitter  
waste

Of youth and manhood's fullest  
powers.

To amass riches for your heirs  
The highest interests seem low,  
And no man's pelf does command  
wealth,

Nor can it buy friendship or love.

## XXXI

So many do what others do,  
They cannot rise from the  
green mould  
With which their thoughts are  
overgrown.

Life is so varied and diverse,  
They peevish bow to any yoke,  
That the moment has to offer.

## XXXII

Thus people born in low estate  
Must drag their burden, day by  
day.

'Tis hard to mend what is inborn  
And slow the lift to higher plains.  
If drudgery rules from morn to  
night-  
They needs must suffer earthly  
bane.



XXXIII

They stir the coals, press the  
bellows~  
White iron shimmers in the forge  
The air is dust, the houses black,  
Smoke dragons twine 'round  
chimney stacks  
And belch foul breath into the streets.  
Where is the sun? Has day turned  
night?

XXXIV

What use to speak to slaves like  
these  
Of odors sweet of new-mown hay,  
Red and blue flowers in the wheat,  
The old homestead, barns and  
stables,  
Cows coming down the road-  
The angelus over harvest fields.

## XXXV

There's joy in labor, so they say,  
And well that they sing its praises,  
Or mankind in bitter despair  
Would leave factory, forge and  
shop,  
Stead living through their daily  
toil  
Without a thought that death is  
near.

XXXVII

Afraid of death men do not think  
Of their vague meaning on this  
earth.

Blindly they hope for after bliss  
Or sneer at things they can not

guess,  
For is not death the cause of all  
That ever troubled a man's brain.



## XXXVIII

And is it endless sleep and night,  
Deliverance or new keen pain!  
Hot pitch or stale ambrosia?  
There are too many gods adored,  
Can one be right, all others  
wrong -  
Who solves the problem why we  
are?

## XXXIX

*There is no answer to the quest,  
Who knows where we will meet  
again!*

*The star realms opening at night  
Tell us of other wonder worlds—  
Are they spinning through space  
for us,  
Shall we breathe there an ampler  
air.*

XL

Follow you pilgrims of the East  
Through avenues of cypress dim,  
Through golden temples, portals  
red~

Faithful they climb the holy hill  
And there confront an empty space  
Is that the signet of the grave!



*XLI*

*Some think they know and  
others doubt,  
But none can offer balm to all.  
If all were good and fair to meet  
This earth would be a paradise;  
We would not long for other skies  
And gather fruit from every tree.*

## XLII

*But what sad use the world has  
made  
Of nature's boundless plenitude.  
The free and good, the fair and  
true  
Is trodden down by foolish crowds.  
Greed, barren, shameless, rules  
supreme,  
There is no brotherhood 'mong'  
men.*

XLIII

*They dream of universal peace  
In times when greed still  
  cruder grows  
Than in the days of Skalds and  
  Huns -  
Oh, dream of a fraternal race,  
Of happiness to all of man!  
When love will stronger prove  
  than war!*

## XLIV

The sword shall break the sword  
they say,  
And force shall strangle force  
some day.  
Thus men march toward battles  
red,  
Their mangled bodies strew the  
plains,  
While o'er the corpse the  
mother wails,  
Her firstborn slain, her pride in  
life.

XLV

Why should youth be killed from  
afar,

Races struggle in deadly clutch,  
Is there not room for all workers,  
Is not death's scythe sharp  
enough!

Oh, mankind, when will you waken  
To a lesson nobler than death!

XLVI

If youth would refuse to obey  
To die without cause or reason  
If youth would refuse to bear  
arms  
Against brothers they do not know,  
Then like the Chaldean shepherds  
We might greet a rosier dawn.

XLVII

One holy war has to be fought~  
To make both man and woman free:  
The world will flash with signal  
lights,  
Each land ring with its people's  
voice~  
For from those crimson rivulets  
Will flow a saner better life.

## XLVIII

For certain things must need be  
changed,  
Life cannot stay so dull and grey.  
Men must live a freer windblown  
life,  
Women no longer lose their bloom  
In drudgery for bed and fare,  
And children age before their  
time.



## XLIX

Draughts of pure air, bright beams  
of light  
Are free gifts coming from the  
skies,  
Why should sad mothers, children  
frail  
Pine in dark and gruesome hovels,  
Freeze and starve, and with  
thirsty eyes  
See life with song and dance  
glide by.

L

And hunger is a fearful thing.  
It dwarfs the better part in man,  
Naught but a withered shell it  
leaves  
Of some thing that should live  
and breathe.

All nobler impulses turn ghosts,  
Spectres of death among the  
quick.



LII

*What can we do, how can we help!  
The poor can never help the poor,  
The rich but scatter alms derived  
From what is due the common herd.  
The weed plots are crowded thick,  
Who cuts a path for weary feet!*

LIII

*Oh, the helplessness of the good,  
Of the poor the sick, the lonely.  
Can you explain why they suffer,  
Must some perish while others  
thrive?*

*Is survival of the fittest  
Due to the harshness of mankind?*

LIV

Oh, these homes of blighted  
reason,  
Who would not weep at sights  
like these.  
Few years ago they were like us,  
They worked and played, they  
loved and laughed,  
And now - beasts without reason;  
Where are their former joys  
and hopes!

LV

And those who lurk in deadly  
sin,  
Whose book of life reads blood  
and gold,  
Thieves, bandits, outcasts,  
vagrants men,  
Eternal victims of the law,  
Who cannot rise, who have no  
chance  
To wash their grimy hands  
from crime.

LVI

They know not what to do on  
earth,  
Their cup is filled with hate  
and lust.  
None has taught them, Will  
you teach them?  
Have you a better soul than they?  
You have drawn a lucky number,  
For them gay fortune went  
astray.



LVII

*In foolish kindness some aspire  
To staunch the ever aching wound,  
And so they teach, and so they  
preach.*

*How vain to think that your idea  
May cure the vanity of things,  
'Tis shuttlecock and battledore.*

LVIII

How can I give right directions  
When I am a wanderer myself!  
Onward I stroll and ever on  
In my own way courting the sun  
And fashioning some paradise  
Of passing winds and flying  
clouds.



LX

You might not like such simple  
fare,

For you the winds may blow too  
mild~

I cannot tread your well-paved roads  
Though verdant they may seem to you.  
Each path leads to some point of  
view,

What you like best, is best for you.



## LXII

*Have you ever lost a treasure  
Dearer to you than gold or health!  
Have you followed a white hearse  
that  
Carried your dearest dream away,  
Watched the deathbed of your  
mother,  
Or closed a friend's dull staring  
eyes!*

## LXIII

You know the chilling gnaw of  
frost,  
The bitter pain of a blank day.  
The world grows dark, a vanished  
dream,  
Yet it will leave light within its  
wake,  
As a flower expands by dew  
Tears shed by the heart enrich the  
soul.

LXIV

They furrow thought, they  
strengthen will,  
Cleanse the foul places of the mind,  
Yield soothing light to ship-wrecked  
hearts.  
Happy those who, sorrow-driven,  
Bright moments wrest from waves  
of pain  
And sail their barks to peaceful  
ports.



## LXV

*This is the true philosophy,  
Every child may learn the lesson—  
Blaze your own trail the best  
you can  
Without trespassing foreign  
ground;  
Smile, play, and sing, and be alive  
To every blow of circumstance.*

LXVI

To meet the hours as they come,  
Salute the days as they pass by,  
To bend your neck to no one's yoke,  
To be full master of yourself,  
To do a kindness when you can—  
That is the happiness of life.



## LXVIII

Yes, life is vain, life is empty,  
But why repeat a sad refrain,  
This echo of Khayyam's quatrains,  
As long each day has a morrow,  
As long as roses bloom again,  
And empty cups may be refilled.

## LXIX

Though we recall that days are  
short,  
Let's make the passing moments  
hum.

Bees do murmur in the heather,  
Does sundew exist only for them!  
A little joy today seems fairer  
Than the brightest strongholds  
of Spain.

## LXX

*There are some joys all may attain,  
To spouse some cause however slight,  
To be a host to loyal friends,  
To found some freeholds of your  
own,  
Where mothers smile and children  
laugh,  
And live in health and fragrance  
there.*

LXXI

Some day religion unbiased  
May sponsor stern needs of the  
day,  
Life grow untrammelled and joyous  
Without prohibition and laws,  
Science and art prove their uses  
And further the welfare of all.

LXXII

You, people, come out of your  
dreams,  
Woo fortune and you may win her,  
Fill the world with acts of good  
cheer,  
Forget grey cares and daily toil,  
Face bravely the swell and the gale  
And strike out for headlands  
unknown.



*LXXIII*

*Seek beauty and you will find her,  
Brave the surge of the crowded  
streets,  
Or rest at the mountain's green  
slope  
And commune with the trees  
and the birds,  
With the soil and the mossgrown  
rocks,  
And pray at the shrines of the  
gods.*

LXXIV

There are roses and there is youth,  
There are joys and sorrows and  
love,  
Dawn and twilight, the noonday  
sun,  
The rolling plains, the sky and  
the sea,  
None have lost their old time  
mystery,  
Events pass away. beauty  
survives.

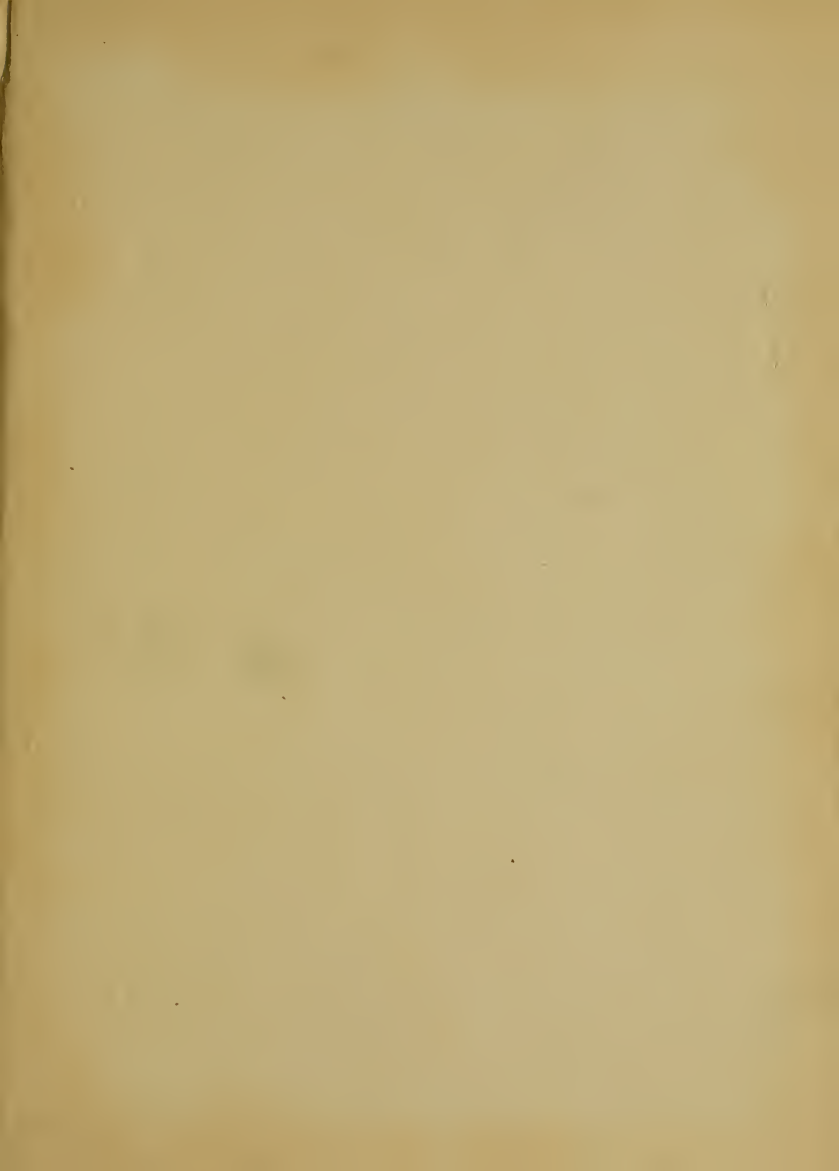
LXXV

Let us wrest beauty from all  
there is,  
Each and all in their own poor  
way,  
And gaily life will blossom forth  
Like a beautiful summer's eve,  
And we'll hail and bless each  
moment  
Before it droops into the dark.

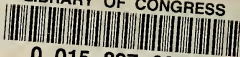
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